



[Cheikh Anta Diop, 1923-1986](#)

Cheikh Anta Diop

Cheikh Anta Diop, a Senegalese nuclear physicist, studied in Paris from 1946 until his return to Senegal in 1960.

In 1951 Diop submitted a thesis in which he argued, correctly, that ancient Egypt was African and not some other thing. After a struggle, he received a doctorate for this work in 1960.

The problem had been that among ancient civilisations, such as those of Mesopotamia, Persia, Mycenae and Greece, that of Egypt was by far the oldest. All of them could be treated as “white”, and racists did so. But in fact Egypt was clearly not “white” in any real sense. It was African, and closely related to black Africa, perhaps even more so then, than it is now.

With his insistence on the African-ness of Ancient Egypt, Diop triumphed. No doubt the prejudice remains, and especially outside of the realm of science it remains. But Diop's work stands and will stand for ever more.

Diop wrote a number of books on African culture and civilization, of which "[Civilisation or Barbarism](#)" (1981) was the last full work published. Please download the extract from that book, linked below.

The extract has been chosen to represent Diop's characteristic line of enquiry, and to show the respect that he had for philosophy, and for the necessity of philosophy.

But what is also clear from the book is that Diop was a scholar of Marxist literature. The title of the book is borrowed from Chapter Nine of Frederick Engels' "Origin of the Family, Private Property and The State". This book is not separate from, but is a continuation of, Marxist scholarship. Cheikh Anta Diop was undoubtedly a revolutionary intellectual as well as a writer of Africa.

In Dakar, Senegal, there is an entire University named after Cheikh Anta Diop. In Yeoville, Johannesburg there is a school named after him. He is one of the legendary scholars of Africa.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-texts: [Cheikh Anta Diop, Civilisation or Barbarism, 1981](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).